

Finding your Volunteers

It's a good idea to have a role description in place before recruiting volunteers (see our [Volunteer Role Descriptions](#) information sheet).

Where to find your volunteers?

Volunteers can be recruited in lots of ways, but make sure that you are using the most appropriate method for the audience you are trying to reach. Where is your audience? Will they read traditional adverts in newspapers or will they be more likely to find out about volunteering opportunities through social media?

Whenever you're recruiting, please consider that you encourage volunteers from a diverse range of groups.



Creating an advert

An advert may be the first time someone has heard about your organisation. Adverts should be clear and concise, contain contact details and where to find out further information. Before posting your own advert, search other adverts from organisations similar to yours or adverts for similar roles. Which ones stand out – why? Which appeal to you – why? How easy were they to find?

It's good to have a snappy title to make your volunteering opportunity stand out from the crowd. An advert, leaflet, poster or web article that merely says 'Volunteers Wanted' may not be enough to catch the eye of potential volunteers. Try using humour or unusual titles/descriptions; for example, one charity shop advertised for a retail guru when it was looking for volunteers to serve behind the counter; they were inundated with enquiries.

Explain what is unique and what's special about your organisation and/or its activities. Potential volunteers may not be aware of what you do, especially the activities outside your main area of business; they may like to know about the variety of services/activities you provide and their importance to the community.

Use a mix of approaches and also think about using stories. An article in a local newspaper or an interview on local radio with a volunteer or beneficiary talking about your organisation acts as an advert. Although it's not a direct ask, always include a line or two at the end of any media activity e.g. 'If you would like to find out more about supporting us, you may like to volunteer. Contact us'

Where to advertise?

Face to Face

Your staff, volunteers and supporters are your biggest asset. Alongside word of mouth, taster sessions, 'bring a friend' and open events or days could be offered. Allow people to try out your organisation and volunteering with you before committing.

Print and media

- **Leaflets and posters:** think carefully about where you will display these, where will your audience see them? For example, supermarkets, libraries, GP surgeries, school receptions and town or parish notice boards are a good place to start – but always ask permission first! Leaflets and posters must be up to date, so don't include anything date specific. Although this approach takes a lot of effort, it does have longevity.
- **Newsletters:** these could be your own, community or parish newsletters and those of interested third parties. Try and use a mix of adverts and stories, and, if possible, include a photograph or image.
- **Organising or speaking at events:** this isn't limited to your own events; maybe try to find out what else is happening in your community. Could you have a stall at a local school fair or farmers market?
- **Press and radio:** make use of large regional and national initiatives, as they already have lots of traction. The hard work has been done for you, for example Volunteers Week in June, and can help you get a foot in the door with local media.

Online

- **Websites:** promote your volunteering roles on your own, third parties, and general community websites. Keep information up-to-date and make sure that your contact details are included.
- **Social media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc. It's not necessary to use every platform - it is better to choose one and do it well. Whatever you choose, it needs to be kept up-to-date. Look at the social media of organisations that are similar to yours - what do they post and who do they follow? Different platforms tend to reach different age groups so think about who you want to reach.
- **Volunteer recruitment websites:** Community First Yorkshire hosts a website called [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\)](#) where organisations can post their volunteer opportunities for free to attract volunteers. Craven runs a similar database called [Compass](#).



Additional Support

Community First Yorkshire can advise you on how to recruit and support your volunteers. Find out more about the volunteering support we offer on our [website](#), or simply fill in an [enquiry form](#) and we'll get back to you.

Don't forget, you can advertise your volunteering roles for free on our [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\)](#) directory?

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